

# **The Book of Exhilaration and Mastery**

**by Philip H. Farber**

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## Introduction

**There is a simple secret to the mastery of every human life and activity.** As simple as it is, this secret is rarely taught and is mostly buried and obscured by the complexities and trivia of our daily lives. It is, in fact, its simplicity and even obviousness that allows it to be hidden in plain sight.

As we grow from infants to adults, our ideas about ourselves are shaped, encouraged, discouraged, built up, torn down, honed, mutilated, perfected, and generally accumulated from everything and everyone we come in contact with. Our parents, teachers, friends, relatives, heroes, politicians, and the media offer us an endless stream of conflicting advice about what we should do with our lives and who we should be. Some of this advice makes good sense for some people, some of the time. Some of it is pure cultural detritus, wisdom that may have been useful in another time and place but may only be a hindrance in our own lives. Some of it is just plain wrong.

We follow advice from all these sources – we go to school, take jobs, associate with friends, and form relationships based on the information given to us. And yet, for most of us, we are left feeling unhappy and unsatisfied with the results of these choices. Our jobs keep us alive, more or less financially solvent. Our relationships provide us with companionship, sex, and families, to a greater or lesser degree of satisfaction. But it is rare that any human distinguishes him or

herself in a way that could be called mastery. The list of people who have excelled in any given field is usually quite small and the rest of us simply follow in the footsteps of these giants.

Most of us in our culture live a life characterized by activities that go no further than survival and distraction. We spend most of our time working to make ends meet and to entertain ourselves in the meantime. The outcome of this way of life is a cultural epidemic of depression, chemical dependency, and stagnation.

There is much more to life than simply working and dying. Most of us grow up and grow old without ever understanding that we have formed our existence based on the ideas of others – and that there may be something else, something beyond cultural expectations and the roles that have been given to us by our families and society.

Every single one of us has the potential for exhilaration and mastery. Every human being on this planet has the ability to rise above our current self concept.

The secret, again, is a simple one that has been stated again and again, hidden in plain sight in the philosophies of every society that has existed on Planet Earth. **The key to mastery exists not in what others have told us, but in the information that is inherent within us.** The secret to mastery comes from

within, from the knowledge in the cells of your body, your DNA, your own internal connections to the universe at large.

The following four sections of this book offer methods to access that crucial internal information in a systematic way. The exercises given are simple.

Practicing them with your full attention and with an open mind will allow you to get the most exhilarating and surprising results.

**This is your guide to finding out the truth about yourself and then using that information to change and improve your life. Are you ready to take the leap?**

## **Part One: Prosperity**

When the word “prosperity” is mentioned, everyone has their own immediate response. For some the word elicits thoughts of money in abundance, for others ideas of a thriving family are foremost, for some “prosperity” is about a bountiful harvest, or a fully stocked store, or a collection of books or stamps or coins – or just about anything, given the diversity of humans and cultures on this planet. For our purposes here we are going to use a very simple and open-ended definition:

**Prosperity is the ability to do what you want to do.**

How many times have you heard someone say that they always wanted to write a book, or learn to dance, or start a band, or patent an invention – or any of a thousand other activities – but they just didn’t have the time? Or they didn’t have enough money. Or any of a thousand other excuses. How many times have you said these things yourself?

Short of an accidental or untimely death, we all have roughly the same amount of time. One lifetime. All our days are the same length: 24 hours. Our weeks are all seven days and our years are always clocked by the same orbit of the planet. So how is it that some people manage to prosper in that time while others toil unhappily? How do a very few manage to not only excel, but change the world in their lifetimes?

Here's where prosperity comes into play. To have the time and resources and motivation to achieve mastery in a given field, at least some of our basic needs in life must be fulfilled.

**The Basic Needs of Humans:**

**Survival.** Food, clothing, shelter, basic health.

**Power.** Territory, possessions, influence over others.

**Information.** Language, knowledge, science, problem-solving.

**Sex and Status.** Ability to attract a mate.

**Transcendence.** Altered states, "psychic" knowledge, ability to interact with entities, awareness of internal and external consciousness.

If we are in any way pre-occupied with a lack in our basic needs, we become distracted from the extended concentration and focus necessary to excel at our chosen task. If we are working all the time just to survive, we will not have time to do anything beyond that. If we are in debt and immanent foreclosure or eviction preys upon our mind, we are more likely to spend our time fighting the negative consequences as opposed to honing our craft. If we have no secure place in which to work, the paranoia and insecurity will likely cloud our efforts. If we are inhibited in expressing ourselves, or have some impediment to accessing information about our field, we will likely produce little useful outcome. If we are

obsessed with the failure of, difficulties with, or lack of sexual relationships, these concerns will also cloud our efforts and impede our ability to act.

In short, our basic needs must at least be addressed before we can start to contrive our circumstances in ways that support our intended work. **Contrive your circumstances to support your work.** This is rarely something that happens all at once or in a final way. We are working to satisfy our basic needs throughout our lives. Some people reading this text will need to address these issues solely before moving on to the rest of the book. For most, however, this is a process that can continue as you move forward toward the mastery of your craft. (Figuring out what that craft might entail will come in a later chapter.) That is, you can begin with the exercises outlined in this chapter and continue with them as you work with the rest of the material in this book.

### **The Prosperity Technique:**

**1. Identify some of the challenges you have meeting the basic needs of your life.** What worrying thoughts occupy your mind? What aspects of your life take up inordinate amounts of time that would otherwise be devoted to your own work? What stresses you out?

**2. Determine the opposites of those challenges.** If you are concerned with poverty, then the opposite may be sufficiency. If you are concerned with a difficult relationship, then the opposite may be a rewarding or pleasant relationship. And

so on. These will be unique for you. For this exercise, avoid excess. Stick with the simplest opposite. If you think you should be rich and famous, allow that to come naturally from the mastery of your work, in the later exercises. For now we are simply addressing basic needs.

**3. Breathe and banish.** Imagine a circle around yourself, at about the diameter of your spread arms. Sit or stand in the center of that circle. Fill your lungs completely, with a slow, even inhalation. As you inhale, allow your attention to expand to fill the circle. As you exhale, slowly, evenly, and completely, allow your attention to contract to a single point in the center of your chest. Repeat at least three times.

**4. Form a visual image of yourself, standing or sitting outside the circle.**

Some people visualize more easily than others. If you find it easier to hear the sounds or voice of your imagined self or to feel your presence outside the circle, then begin with those senses. Then begin to fill in the other sensory details until you have at least a rudimentary visual image. An alternative method is to imagine that you are looking at a mirror or a video image of yourself. This may take practice, though I would note that at this point perfection is not necessary. Just knowing that the image you see is an image of yourself will be enough for now.

**5. Adjust the image into one of a self who *has already* met a particular basic need.** Work with just one of the basic needs you identified in Step 1 and allow your self-image to reflect the opposite of that need, as identified in Step 2. Keep the image confined to an image of your self – background details are not necessary at this stage. Think about how this person that you see, who has



already resolved this particular issue, who has already developed the resources necessary to satisfy this particular basic need, will look. What is his or her posture like? Facial expression? How does he or she breathe? What is his or her skin tone like? Which muscles are relaxed and which active? Remember that these details will develop and possibly even change with repeated practice. Again, stick with just one basic need for this exercise – you'll be able to address other needs as you repeat the exercise on successive days.

**6. Contemplate the image for at least 30 seconds.**

**7. Pull the image into the circle with you and draw it into you.** Wear it like clothing, wrap it around you, let it interpenetrate your body and mind. Let your own body, posture, breathing, facial expression, etc. reflect what you saw in this image. Let the memories of this (future) self who has already resolved this basic need be your memories.

**8. Breathe and banish.** Repeat Step 3.

**9. Be open to thoughts, epiphanies, and suggestions from your unconscious mind** that may occur throughout the day as a result of this practice.

When you first begin to practice this exercise, allow time to learn the steps and allow for a learning curve in terms of visualization, imagination, and accessing of details. **Once you have learned the steps, take no longer than ten minutes to practice. Practice no more than once a day, addressing only ONE basic need per session.**

## **Part Two: Moving and Breathing**

### **Moving**

We all have collections of postures and movements that are habitual to us. Some people have very free-flowing movements, others are rigid. Some move quickly, some slowly. Some stretch and some contract. Our bodies are capable of moving in ways that we rarely explore. How often do you raise your arms over your head? Or bend from the hip? Or walk backwards? Or do a cartwheel?

Humans learn to move, when we are small, by watching others and then experimenting until we can imitate the movement. As a result of this process of imitative learning, our habitual movements are often culturally transmitted. This can be fairly obvious when we consider behaviors including gestures, greetings, and social formalities. Cultural ideas of dress and propriety also influence habitual movement. Some clothing is restrictive, for example. A businessman in a tucked-in dress shirt will be unlikely to raise his arms over his head. Women in dresses and skirts learn to cross legs or keep thighs closed to accommodate both dress and propriety. Business footwear is unsuitable for running or climbing. And so on.

**Body position and movement are closely associated with states of consciousness.** Not only do posture and motion reflect internal experience, they also influence your state of mind. That you are capable of movement beyond your habitual restrictions suggests states of consciousness that remain latent. These states are there as possibilities only, most of the time. They represent aspects of your unconscious mind, something that remains a part of you but is rarely explored. Your potential.

That potential, of course, can take many different forms. If you are going to explore movements and combinations of movements that are part of this set of unexplored potential, then by all means **select those that represent exhilarating and motivating experiences.**

### **The Freedom Dance**

- 1. Pick out some great music with a good tempo and dance to it.**
- 2. Get wild.** “Dance as if no one is watching.” Move freely. Work and play with all your muscles and joints. Explore your range of movement in every limb. Some people are more flexible than others; some have limitations due to injury or illness. Just do as much as you can.
- 3. Repeat regularly.**

## **Adaptive Mimicry**

**1. Observe other people and find exciting movements and postures.** You can look at images in the media, at athletes, musicians, movie stars, at your friends, family, and people you see on the street. If a movement or posture catches your interest – it could be anything, a particular nod of the head, a movement of the hand, a manner of stance, or a new dance, a martial arts move, or a strength exercise – then remember it. If you can save it in some form that you can view later, so much the better. A picture, a video, a diagram, whatever works for you.

**2. Learn the movements.** Start with simple and basic movements before you advance to more complex ones. Practice them.

**3. Any movements that encourage exhilaration and motivation, repeat frequently.**

## **Breathing**

Breathing, like movement, provides a link to the unconscious mind. The control of breathing is usually outside our awareness, something that just happens while

our attention is engaged elsewhere. But we can, at will, change the way we breathe.

Breathing is a vital function upon which most other physiological functions depend. Subtle changes in the depth, frequency or manner of your breathing will induce pervasive change throughout your body. Every organ may be affected in some way, including your heart and your brain. **Your state of consciousness is deeply dependent on your breathing.**

Just as with movement, we have habitual patterns of breathing that we have learned largely from the people around us. We've learned these habits usually on an entirely unconscious level. When we begin to consciously direct our breathing we take conscious control of our state of mind.

Explore the following techniques one at a time. Practice at least once a day and spend at least one week on each technique. Continue indefinitely with the techniques that provide you the most exhilaration or motivation.

### **The Full Breath (or Yogic Breath)**

**1. Notice that there are three areas of the lungs.** The lower part of the lungs is controlled by movements of the diaphragm and when you breathe from this part

your abdomen will rise and fall. The middle part of the lungs is controlled by expansion and contraction of the rib cage and when you breathe from this part your chest will rise and fall. The top of the lungs is controlled by movements of the shoulder blades and when you breathe from this part your shoulders will rise and fall.

**2. Practice breathing from each part of the lungs separately.**

**3. Take a full, deep breath that fills all three areas of the lungs to their capacity,** without straining.

**4. Repeat Full Breaths,** with no pause between them, at a relaxed and comfortable pace, for at least ten minutes or as long as one hour.

### **Ecstatic Breathing**

**1. Breathe through your mouth, slowly and evenly,** for about one minute.

**2. Breathe by drawing the air into the bottommost part of your lungs,** deep into your belly. Start with a slow, even pace then gradually increase the rate until, finally, you are panting, but still filling and emptying the deepest part of your lungs.

**3. Continue to pant for half a minute then take a deep, full breath,** filling your lungs from top to bottom. Hold the breath for ten seconds, then release and breathe slowly and deeply a few times. Then return to panting and repeat this cycle until you have deepened your trance state.

## **Expansion and Contraction**

As described in the Prosperity Technique, you can now apply The Full Breath to this method: Imagine a circle around yourself, at about the diameter of your spread arms. Sit or stand in the center of that circle. Fill your lungs completely, with a slow, even inhalation. As you inhale, allow your attention to expand to fill the circle. As you exhale, slowly, evenly, and completely, allow your attention to contract to a single point in the center of your chest. Repeat at least three times.

## **Part Three: Mastery**

The following exercise may be practiced daily, indefinitely or until you are satisfied with the results. Once again, allow for a learning curve. The first time you attempt this it may require an hour or more to complete all the elements. You may also choose to practice it in increments, and build up your resources and abilities over a period of days until you are performing the entire operation.

Whichever you choose, when you become proficient this may take no longer than ten or fifteen minutes to perform. It seems complex at first, but as you practice you'll find it easier and easier to remember the various elements of the exercise.

### **Developing Resources**

**1. Select six qualities or behaviors that are components of your highest aspiration.** You may select qualities that you already have, strongly. You may select qualities that you are weak in and hope to develop. You may select qualities that you do not have and hope to acquire. These could be chosen from a field of qualities that includes, but is not limited to, confidence, compassion, strength, intelligence, decisiveness, motivation, joy, sexiness, directness, extroversion, introversion, creativity, passion, leadership, intuition, spirituality, rapport, and so on. Select only qualities that contribute to your highest



aspiration, to your ultimate purpose and function on Planet Earth. At this point, your highest aspiration may be something vague that you refer to as “highest aspiration;” or it may be something very well-defined that you refer to by a term you already know. For each of the six qualities that you have selected, develop a movement or gesture by the following process:

**2. Sitting or standing, recall a time when you had a powerful experience of the chosen quality.** If you are working with a quality with which you have limited or no direct experience, something you want to strengthen or acquire, then you may select another person that you know who has this quality at times and imagine what it would be like to be that person at those times.

**3. Remember or imagine the visual components of this experience:** what colors were in your field of vision, whether you could see movement or stillness, whether it was light or dark, and anything else you can recall.

**4. As you notice what you saw, remember or imagine what you heard** during this experience: sounds or silence, voices or tones, rhythms or noises, background sounds, and anything else you may have been able to hear.

**5. As you notice what you saw and heard, remember or imagine what you felt** during this experience: notice where in your body the feeling begins and where it moves to as the feeling develops. Notice what kind of feeling it may be, pressure, temperature, movement, texture, or whatever it was that you felt.

**6. Give the feeling a color or colors.** “If this feeling were a color, what would it be?” Apply the color to wherever you feel the feeling so that you end up with a colored map of the sensation in your body.

**7. Make the color brighter, richer, more vibrant, or whatever also makes the feeling more intense.** For most people and most feelings, making the color

brighter or more vibrant will increase the feeling, although for some people and some feelings making the color more muted or dimmer will increase the feeling.

Use what works for you. Intensify the experience to exhilaration.

**8. Breathe deeply and make or imagine the color flowing through more and more of your body.**

**9. Feel how the feeling has intensified. Savor it.**

**10. Take a deep breath and then express the feeling as a gesture or movement.** Take note of this movement in some form that will enable you to remember it later.

**11. Repeat for each of your six chosen qualities** so that you develop a catalog of six movements that you can use in Part Two. These same six movements will serve you through many repetitions of The Mastery Technique. If you ever decide that you want to change, tweak, or empower your work, you can return to this section and create new movements based on the same or alternative qualities.

## **The Mastery Technique**

**1. Imagine a circle around you, drawn on the floor.** Make the circle about twice the diameter of your outstretched arms, or as close to that size as space permits.

**2. Perform at least three cycles of Expansion and Contraction Breathing** in the circle.

**3. In your mind, notice six points along the circumference of the circle,** spaced equal distances apart.

**4. Walk to the edge of your circle and pace around the circumference. As you get to each of the six points, perform one of the movements,** as fully and completely as possible, that you created in Developing Resources. Do this until you have performed all six of your movements, one at each of the six, equidistant points.

**5. Return to the center of the circle.**

**6. Face one of the six points. Imagine seeing yourself standing at the circumference of the circle, performing the movement that you performed there.**

**7. Take a Full Breath. As you exhale, using the entire breath, say the name of the quality** that applies to the movement and point you are looking at. At the same time, **imagine that a color or energy or vibration or sound or feeling is emanating from that image of you.** Allow that color or whatever to fill the entire circle.

**8. Take a moment to experience what that color or energy feels like** as you stand in a circle full of it.

**9. Repeat for each of the six points/movements.**

**10. Take a moment to see all the self-images and movements at the same time, along the circumference of the circle.**

**11. Take a large step backwards.**

**12. Imagine the six movement-images of yourself, either one at a time or all at once, whichever is easiest for you, moving into the center of the circle, just in front of you.**

**13. Allow them to combine** in whatever way they seem predisposed to. They may take a definite shape or become amorphous. They may still be recognizable as images of you, or they may not. However it happens is fine.

**14: Take Full Breaths and use your exhalations to send attention and energy into the shape** for at least one minute.

**15. Optional: In your mind you may now communicate with this shape/entity.** Ask it what it would like to be called, how to call it back again faster and more powerfully. Ask it what you can learn from it concerning your highest aspirations in life or what it can tell you about changes, additions, and deletions in your behavior and life in general that can bring you closer to your goals. And anything else that might occur to you to ask it, as long as you remain focused on your highest aspirations and goals.

**16. Step forward, into the shape/entity.**

**17. Take a moment to appreciate and enjoy the experience.** Notice how you feel, what you hear, what you see, and anything else that presents itself to consciousness.

**18. Breathe and absorb all your imaginings back into you,** except the circle.

**19. Take at least three Expansion and Contraction Breaths.**

**20 Absorb the circle back into you.**

**21. Be open to thoughts, epiphanies, and suggestions from your unconscious mind** that may occur throughout the day as a result of this practice.

## Part Four: Making It Happen

The Making Technique is essentially the same method as the Prosperity Technique, however you will now begin using any and all insights gained from the Mastery Technique to define your goals and outcomes. That is, as your ideas about your highest aspirations become more defined and more detailed, you can adjust your ongoing efforts to include them and to move well beyond basic needs.

Just as with Prosperity, it is likely that what you consider your highest aspiration or life goal will be an ongoing process, not something attained in a single effort. If it IS something attained in a single effort, then you can use this technique to help achieve it – and return to these techniques to continue and go beyond it.

### Making Technique

**1. Breathe and banish.** Imagine a circle around yourself, at about the diameter of your spread arms. Sit or stand in the center of that circle. Fill your lungs completely, with a slow, even inhalation. As you inhale, allow your attention to expand to fill the circle. As you exhale, slowly, evenly, and completely, allow your

attention to contract to a single point in the center of your chest. Repeat at least three times.

**2. Form a visual image of yourself, standing or sitting outside the circle.**

**3. Adjust the image into one of a self who *has already* developed the abilities, skills, and resources to achieve Mastery.** Use whatever information you gained during the days of working with the Mastery Technique to know what this person you are looking at is capable of doing, thinking, saying, and experiencing. Keep the image confined to an image of your self – background details are not necessary at this stage. Think about how this person will look. What is his or her posture like? Facial expression? How does he or she breathe? What is his or her skin tone like? Which muscles are relaxed and which active? Remember that these details will develop and possibly even change with repeated practice.

**4. Contemplate the image for at least 30 seconds.**

**5. Pull the image into the circle with you and draw it into you.** Wear it like clothing, wrap it around you, let it interpenetrate your body and mind. Let your own body, posture, breathing, facial expression, etc. reflect what you saw in this image. Let the memories of this (future) self who has attained Mastery be your memories.

**8. Breathe and banish.** Repeat Step 1.

**9. Be open to thoughts, epiphanies, and suggestions from your unconscious mind** that may occur throughout the day as a result of this practice.

**Once you have learned the steps, take no longer than ten minutes to practice. Practice no more than once a day. Enjoy your life.**



## Afterword

Over the years, we've learned that while a great many people will purchase and read a book like this, only a few will actually practice the techniques with persistence and full attention. Many will make excuses – they have already practiced something like it (though there is nothing exactly like it), or they don't understand the need for a particular aspect of it (and they won't understand until they actually do it), or, predictably, that they don't have the time or resources (see the Introduction). The excuses are numerous and the inertia is enormous. It is certainly easier to remain comfortably where you are than to excel in your life. Or is it?

**The few who do read this book and practice the techniques with persistence and full attention, will have the ability to change the world.**

If you are one of the few and you are ready to learn more, come visit us at

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